A study of self- esteem, perceived stress and academic performance among adolescents

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Abstract
Self-esteem is a fundamental human motive that all people strive to protect and enhance (Rosenberg, 1989). Baumeister *et al.* (2003) remarked that self-esteem is a highly desirable psychological source of positive behavior which may include academic achievement. Stress is the physiological reaction which occurs when people perceive an imbalance between the level of demand placed upon them and their capability to meet those demands. The current investigation was designed to study the interrelationship between self- esteem, perceived stress and academic performance among adolescents. The sample for the current investigation consisted of 40 adolescents (where 20 are males and 20 are females) in the age group of 16-18 years of tricity of Panchkula, Mohali and Chandigarh. For this purpose, the Self- Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen & Williamson, 1988) were administered to the sample. The average score of the last two year's examination was taken as the score for academic performance. Inter- correlational analysis was used for statistical analysis. Results were discussed in terms of its implications.

Keywords: self esteem, perceived stress, academic performance, adolescents

Introduction
Aim
To study the interrelationship of self- esteem, stress and academic performance among adolescents.

Adolescence is one of the most swift phases of human development. Some adolescents are particularly vulnerable. So, they are adolescents are unable to handle stressors, experience low self- worth and show a decline in academic performance. Delahaij, Dam, Gaillard and Soeters (2011) [7] explain stress using a biopsychosocial approach, suggesting that stressful reactions affect the emotional, physiological and cognitive state of an individual. The stressors adolescents experience range from the school environment to home and family life, and extend as far as universal social issues (De Anda *et al*., 2000) [6]. A low self- esteem also leads to stress in adolescents. With low self –esteem and high stressors, adolescents face academic issues leading to less academic success and less achievement motivation.

Self - Esteem
Self-esteem can be defined as an individual's attitude about him or herself, involving self- evaluation along a positive negative dimension (Baron & Byrne, 1991) [2]. Most generally self-esteem refers to an individual's overall positive evaluation to the self (Rosenberg, Carmi, & Carrie, 1995) [20]. Self-esteem is imperative because of its power in protecting and enhancing a person's feelings of self-worth and value. It is also important because it is a primary human motive that measures one's experience and value of life (Knightley & Whitelock, 2007; Lane, Lane, & Kyprianu, 2004; Pepi, Faria, & Alesi, 2006) [11, 12, 16]. Teachers, administrators and parents are generally concerned about student's self-esteem. Its significance is often exaggerated to the extent that low self-esteem is viewed as the cause of all evil and high self-esteem as the cause of all good (Manning, Bear & Minke, 2006) [14].

Perceived Stress
Stress is now conceptualized as, "the inability to cope with a perceived or real (or imagined) threat to one's mental, physical, emotional or spiritual well-being which results in a series of physiological reactions and adaptations" (Seaward, 2008). The key aspect of this new definition is on the emphasizing of perception of the individual. The term Perceived Stress means physiological arousal, subjective feelings of discomfort and the behavioral changes people experienced when they confronted situations that they appraise as dangerous or threatening (Auerbach, 1998) [1].

Academic Performance
Academic performance is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their short or long-term educational goals. Academic achievement could be defined as self-perception and self-evaluation of one's objective academic success. Academic achievement normally indicates the learning outcomes of pupil. Achievement of those learning outcomes requires a series of planned and organized experiences. Good (1973) [10], has defined, academic achievement as knowledge attitude or skill developed in the school subject usually designed by test scores or by marks assigned by teacher or by both. As a result, academic achievement could be defined as self perception and self evaluation of one's objective success.

Hypotheses
1. It is expected that there will be a negative relationship between self-esteem and perceived stress.
2. It is expected that there will be negative relationship

between perceived stress and academic performance.

3. It is expected that there will be a positive relationship between self- esteem and academic performance.

Methodology
Sample
The sample for the current investigation comprised of 40 adolescents, who were further divided on the basis of gender, that is, 20 are males and 20 are females. The age group of the sample was 16-18 years. The sample was collected from the tricity of Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali.

Test and Tools
For this purpose, the Self- Esteem Scale (Rosenberg *et al*.,

1965) and Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen & Williamson, 1988) [5] were administered to the sample. The average score of the last two year's examination was taken as the score for academic performance.

Statistical Analysis
Keeping in mind the purpose of the current investigation which was to study the interrelationship between self- esteem, stress and academic performance among adolescents; inter correlational analysis was used. Combined data of male adolescents and female adolescents were taken, gender differences were not taken into consideration for this investigation.

Results

Table 1: shows the inter-correlation matrix between self-esteem, stress and academic performance.

	Self-esteem	Perceived Stress	Academic Performance
Self- esteem	____	-0.42**	0.41**
Perceived Stress		____	-0.33*
Academic Performance			____

* Significant at 0.05 level and **significant at 0.01 level (df =38)

Discussion
The primary objective of this study was to study the interrelationship between self- esteem, stress and academic performance among adolescents.

Hypothesis 1 stated that there will be a negative relationship between self- esteem and perceived stress. The results show that is self- esteem was negatively related to perceived stress as the correlation coefficient comes out to be -0.42 which is significant at 0.01 level. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is accepted. The findings of this study are in line with the hypothesis stated above. Low self-esteem and stress are associated with mood disorders and depression. Students with high self-esteem seem to be less stressed than those who have low self-esteem and have high stress (Reilly *et al*., 2014) [17]. Finally, the transition to college has often been treated as a period that creates significant stress in the lives of students, increases their distress and lowers their self-esteem (Besser & Zeigler-Hill, 2012) [4]. Self-esteem seems to be connected with stressors that have to do with feelings (Fernández-González, González-Hernández, & Trianes-Torres, 2015) [9].

Hypothesis 2 stated that there will be a negative relationship between stress and academic performance. The correlation coefficient comes out to be -0.33 which is significant at 0.05 level. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is accepted. Stressors can either motivate or humiliate a person in his or her educational journey (Von, 2011) [22]. Human beings are significantly influenced by various psychological as well as physiological factors they experience in their everyday lives (Laura, Friedlander, Reid, Shupak & Robert, 2007) [13]. However, Von (2011) [22] has found that stress is strongly connected with students' educational performance.

Hypothesis 3 stated that there will be a positive relationship between self esteem and academic performance. The correlation coefficient comes out to be 0.41 which is significant at 0.01 level. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is accepted. High

level of self-esteem brings a high level of self-confidence, which in turn improves academic performance. Thus, self-esteem serves as a moderately enduring positive or negative feeling about self that may become more or less positives and negatives when individuals experience and define success and failures throughout their lives (Eid *et al*., 2015) [8]. Self-esteem and academic achievement has been highlighted in the literature (Mohammad, 2010) [15].

Conclusion
In the present study, we have ascertained that adolescence is a phase when there are multiple stressors. These stressors lead to low academic achievement in adolescents. Having a high self –esteem is important else low self- esteem leads to several inferiority complexes in the adolescents. So, proper emphasis is needed to make the adolescents stress free, interventions need to be made to enhance their self-esteem. This shall directly lead to a greater academic success and achievement in adolescents.

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